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The Changing Complexion of the
Nationale Liga

15 October 1951
V-24024

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(D) Fritz ~~WOLLAND~~ ~~GRAS~~, Begleitstrasse 105, formerly of the Young Front (Junge Front - splinter group formerly connected with the CeVP). The administrative manager is Hans Maltz, ~~WOLKA~~ ~~GRAS~~, Schillerstrasse 53. The NL is organized geographically along the lines of the NSDAP. The smallest group is called a Gruppe and corresponds roughly to the K-see section. The next unit is the Gebiet. The Gebiet for Vienna XVII and XVIII corresponds geographically to the former Sturmbanner Obergebiet or Standortbereich. The next higher organizations are the Landesleitung and the Bundesleitung. As far as source knows, smaller organizations exist in the area of the former SA Stabsarte 100, Hietzing, and in Vienna II, Vienna XX, and Vienna XII. Dues are paid on an annual basis at the rate of 15 Schillings per annum. After the payment of this fee, each member is issued a membership card. All other money collected is referred to as fighting fund contributions (Kampfspende) and is turned over to the various organizers on the Gebiet level. According to Dr. SLAVIK and Ferdinand REIDINGER, born on 8 May 1903 in Vienna, residing at Vienna XVII, Eieglergasse 5/5, one of the leading figures in the Wehring Gebiet of the NL, there are 15,500 members in Vienna and the stream of new recruits is very heavy because recruiting is well organized. In July 1951, there were allegedly 93 new members recruited in Wehring alone. On 24 August 1951, a new section was established in Vienna XIX, Döbling. The announcement was made at that date to an assemblage of 45 persons at the Gasthof Fehrburg, Vienna XIX, Cottagesgasse. Efforts have been made to organize a women's auxiliary of the NL. However, membership in this organization consists for the most part of the wives of present members. The NL has had little success in recruiting women who have not some member of their family already in the organization. The NL has had some further success in establishing a youth group called the Nationale Jugend. This organization very closely resembles the Hitler Jugend and it hopes to establish a newspaper in the near future. National headquarters for this organization is also located in the national headquarters of the NL.

Propaganda of the NL is handled by those members who did similar work for the NSDAP or one of its affiliated organizations. As an example, Heinrich ~~WOLKA~~ was an "Alter

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Kneipfer, NSDAP No. 115,723, and leader for propaganda during the illegal period for this area according to records of the Ministry of Interior) and Ferdinand W. D. (AGENT'S NOTE: REIDINGER was an "alter Kneipfer", NSDAP No. 904,467, and worked as a propagandist for the party organization during the illegal period, according to records of the Austrian Ministry of Interior). Propaganda is centralized and disseminated at weekly meetings together with appropriate instructions. The NL puts special attention to propaganda in plants and factories. Political interest is stimulated and new members are recruited through the liberal finances which the NL seems to have available. When the successful conclusion of a transaction or activity is reported to the cashiers of a Gebiet or Obergebiet, funds are made available immediately. Further proof of the large quantity of money behind the NL was observed during the last presidential elections, when the NL distributed, free of charge, large quantities of leaflets, pamphlets, and propaganda material. Source estimated the cost of the paper alone in the thousands of schillings and inasmuch as the NL is a numerically small organization, these funds must have come from an outside source.

The political aim of the NL is a radical policy based on the "leader principle" (Fuehrerprinzip) and no oppositor is tolerated. To further this radical policy, Dr. SLAVIK, representing his organization, contacted the Soviet occupation power and submitted the following requests:

1. Full political support by the KPO and the Soviets.
2. Occupation of positions in the police forces by NL members.
3. Friendly relations to the KPO recognized by the Soviets and support promised.

That degree of success SLAVIK has met in his negotiations with the Soviets is unknown to Source. However, from SLAVIK's notions, Source deduces that SLAVIK must be succeeding at least to a degree. SLAVIK's attitude toward political problems is completely pro-Communist. For example, SLAVIK states openly that the Soviets and Communism need former NL personalities. He points out that most of the key positions in East Germany's People's Police are held by former Gestapo officers and other NS formation leaders. The Soviets have

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proved that they respect former NS personnel who are flexible enough to join with them. (We must always link his destiny with political reality) and here it is clear that one must be for the most powerful force in the area. This policy is defeated in Austria by "American imperialism" but the Americans will never stick to the worker. The little man is of no interest to them and he is tolerated only so long as he is needed. The Soviets, on the other hand, appreciate the worker and therefore there is only one course open, i.e., communication with the Soviets.

In the past, the NL has usually met in small select groups, weekly or semi-monthly, in a Gasthaus or cafe. They gather at various tables, discuss political problems and receive propaganda of the "Volksstimme" brand. Source has attended many of these sessions, and the primary bone of contention among the guests is always the Eastern policy of Dr. SLAVIK. There is a strong tide against SLAVIK because of his pro-Soviet attitude, and the whispering campaign that there will be an interior revolution resulting in the dethroning of SLAVIK grows louder each day.

Evidence of a New Course for the NL

At a meeting held at 1800 hours on 26 July 1951 in a Gasthaus Bierstube in Vienna, SLAVIK, REIDINGER, (Chap. HARRIS), and Source discussed the best method to use in an effort to take up liaison with the Jung Front. It was decided that the best approach would be on the basis of "former solidiers" and since Source was a wartime friend of (Major) KUNST-SIRACHWITZ, GRASS, SCHENKEL-GRASS, leader of the Jung Front, it was decided that Source should take the lead in such negotiations. SLAVIK proposed a meeting for the following evening with Jung Front, FREUDEN-SIRACHWITZ, Dr. WILLRIED KUNST, and FRITZ SCHENKEL-GRASS, all acquaintances of Source, in the apartment of (Chap. HARRIS) at 1800 hours. The latter is the president of some forester's society and allegedly possesses large assets in Slovakia. He is also allegedly a political organizer. Unfortunately, PRINGNITZER was the only guest who appeared and he clarified his presence by pointing out that he would take part in the meeting only in an advisory capacity because he alone could have no definite promises. On 10 August 1951, a second meeting

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took place in Coester Bierstube with SLAVIK, HADNER, FRACHWITZ, and Source. Nothing was accomplished at either of these meetings, and the subject remained in a state of quiescence until 26 August 1951, when SLAVIK and REIDINGER instructed Source to take up correspondence with one or all of the previously mentioned group (AGRP's) view to paving the way for further discussions. (AGRP's NOTE: Source discussed this problem with the undesignated agent. In view of the apparent trend of former National Socialists and other extreme right-wing elements to flow together, and in consideration of the opposition to SLAVIK's pro-Soviet attitude within the NL, this agent advised Source not to take up correspondence, but to try and secure permission from SLAVIK to represent the NL in personal negotiations with the persons concerned. In considering the three personalities, that of STRACHWITZ seemed the strongest, and therefore the most logical for the extreme right-wing elements to coagulate around in a stronger organization which could sever its connections with SLAVIK. It was therefore decided that if SLAVIK would consent, Source would travel to Graz and speak with STRACHWITZ before the latter reported to attend the opening session of Parliament in Vienna.) Source approached SLAVIK with the more direct proposal that he personally visit Graz, but SLAVIK, although admitting the merit of the suggestion, thought it would bring even further results if he, SLAVIK, went to Graz with a letter of introduction from Source, and spoke with STRACHWITZ. Source wrote the necessary letter, and SLAVIK left for Graz in the early part of September 1951. On 7 September 1951, Source was introduced to HADNER, who stated that the preliminary negotiations between STRACHWITZ and SLAVIK had already taken place and the result would probably be very satisfactory. On 12 September 1951, Source heard from REIDINGER that HADNER was to leave for Graz the following day to assist SLAVIK in the negotiations.

In the middle of September 1951, SLAVIK returned to Vienna and in a discussion with Source revealed that while no final decisions were made in the course of negotiations with STRACHWITZ, the matter was far from a closed issue. SLAVIK instructed Source to approach STRACHWITZ on a friendly basis and tell him that while the NL will not change its direction, in no immediate fusion can be effected, perhaps a mutual line could be found. If this can be achieved, matters of mutual interest to both groups might be solved by first, discussion, and finally, combined action. Surely if a common line could

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be found, agreement on a common line of action could be attained. SLAVIK also indicated that a working agreement between the Junges Front and the NL would be very desirable, and SLAVIK stated that STRACHWITZ should not demand too much before an agreement is reached, but first acknowledge agreement and then from this point, STRACHWITZ's suggestions would be taken under consideration.

With these thoughts in mind, Source arranged a meeting with STRACHWITZ on 21 September 1951 at a cafe in Vienna. PRINCEWITZ was also present at this meeting. STRACHWITZ stated that he did not enter into this arrangement immediately, because he is afraid that he will again be relegated to the sidelines, which he wishes to prevent in any case. Over and above that, he does not want to settle this matter alone as National Chairman of the Junges Front. He feels that it should be discussed with his western provincial headquarters, especially with the Tyrol group, before any final action is taken. One of the primary points of friction between SLAVIK and STRACHWITZ concerns SLAVIK's relations with the Soviet Occupation Power. STRACHWITZ feels that since he brings not only his own personality and parliamentary mandate, but also people and an organization, he does not have to accept the first offer. Following the saying, "White makes matter", he will decide only after a discussion with his own people. PRINCEWITZ, who is flattered by SLAVIK's friendly and polite manner, was very enthusiastic about the suggestion and tried at length to persuade STRACHWITZ and Source, who had used a negative approach, in favor of his fusion. The meeting continued for three hours, and from the discussion Source expressed the opinion that STRACHWITZ favors the fusion but is being extremely cautious. STRACHWITZ stated, "You know, it is never good to run over with flying colors to other people." He is aware that the NL is very much interested in the fusion, but feels that if he bides his time the situation will improve for him.

An NL meeting conducted at the Wilhelm GERINGER Hall, Vienna, AT, which attracted 167, on 28 September 1951, TRUBER addressed a comparatively large gathering of NL members and guests on the subject, "The Reality of the Economic Policy of the Coalition." The guests included VDU representatives in

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addition to the usual members. One of these functionaries, Karl RUCHSBERG, date and place of birth unknown, participated intensely in the animated discussion that followed TRUGER's address. AGNIT's NO. 1: Source had reported a marked increase in VDU participation in NL meetings. Therefore, this agent instructed Source to begin feeling out various members of the NL concerning their attitude on the formation of a right-wing group. Following this meeting, Source entered a discussion with TRUGER, WILSON, MAFOLD, date and place of birth unknown, and Karl RUCHSBERG, born 23 October 1902 in Vienna. The last two personalities are functionaries in the Working Group of the NL. In the course of this discussion, Source broached the forming of a block of right-oriented circles. In this connection, TRUGER said that discussions with retired Colonel Oskar Schmid have already taken place in Salzburg. These discussions are not yet finished. However, TRUGER added, the VDU is not satisfied with the management of E. Berber, BRAND and eventually he will be forced to withdraw.

A large scale meeting, open to the public, was sponsored by the NL on 5 October 1931 at the Oeschwandner Hall, Vienna XVII, near Hauptstrasse 41. The theme of this meeting was "Down with the Coalition Parties". A large block of seats in the first few rows were reserved for invited guests from the VDU, MAFOLD of the OeVP, the Jung Front, and certain outstanding figures in intellectual fields. Source also recognized members of the OeVP and the SPÖ in the audience. According to statements from MAFOLD and POIGNER, who were in charge of the organization of this meeting, 10 percent of those outside the NL to whom written invitations were extended were present. Source stated that he personally recognized several members of the OeAB but he could not recall their names. (AGNIT's NO. 1: According to information submitted by Informant 1409 (Evaluation: "C"), a few members from various EZÖ districts were instructed to attend this meeting, apparently to fill out the crowd. (Informant 5): Source estimated that there were approximately 1800 persons present at this meeting. The program began at 800 hours with the chairmanship of NICKEITZ. The meeting was called and disciplined and there were no attempts to disturb the proceedings. The first speaker was Ferdinand Haidner, who discussed principally the corruption of the coalition

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Government; quoted a few instances of the unjust results of the Fifth Wage-Price Pact; the recent rent increases; criticism of the Schilling Exchange Law of 1947; and an attack on the ministerial pensions. No malicious attacks against the USA were made in this speech, which ended at approximately 2045 hours. The second speaker was Walther THUEER who spoke about the injustices of the anti-Nazi prohibition laws and repudiated the attacks on Fascism. He maintained that Fascists are in the so-called democratic camp of the government parties and they will not be frightened by anything. Instead they will press their cause to victory and when the right time comes, punish those responsible for corruption. THUEER made no negative remarks concerning the United States and his speech was often interrupted by applause. Dr. SLAVIK was the last speaker to address the audience. He spoke on the historical situation in Austria and directed his main attack against the USA. He concluded with a summons to fight and think of Blomberg. When the time for a showdown comes, everyone should turn where that great politician turned, i.e., to the East. At the end, all three speakers, addressing their remarks to all elements of the VdU and other political groups, stressed that if they cannot be united, then a common line should be attained in order that all may present one front. At the conclusion of the meeting, Source spoke further with SLAVIK and THUEER about the Jung Front. Both THUEER and HAINBERGER seem to be accumulating more enthusiasm for seeking increased concessions in order to effect a fusion. SLAVIK, however, is maintaining a stubborn attitude in contrast to the titular leaders of the NL.

AGENT'S NOTE: As additional developments unfold within range of Source, they will be reported through this agent.

FILE CHECK:

Files of this Sub-Detachment contain numerous references to the personalities mentioned in this report as prominent members of their indicated organizations. References to the Nationale Liga are too voluminous to include intelligently in this check.

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Available background information on Functionaries is included
in the body of the report. The above-mentioned files contain
no record of (fna) MAILLET-PUCURY.

APPROVED:

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